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School Bus Program Advisory 08-002

Documentation of Continuous Safety Certification

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This Policy Advisory informs air districts of alternate forms of documentation that may be used to document the continuous safety certification of school buses that are to be replaced following the requirements of the 2008 Lower-Emission School Bus Program Guidelines (2008 Guidelines).

Background. The 2008 Guidelines state that, to be eligible for replacement, a bus must have a current California Highway Patrol (CHP) safety certification (CHP form 292 – Inspection Approval Certificate) as of December 31, 2005, and have continuous safety certification from that point forward. State funds are limited, and this requirement was established to ensure unused buses are not revived in order to get funding. If a school district is unable to obtain copies of the CHP form 292 that demonstrate continuous safety certification as of December 31, 2005, then, *along with a copy of the current CHP form 292*, the air district must require the school district to provide one of the following sets of documentation listed below. The following options must be considered in the order that they are provided below.

1. Copies of CHP forms 343 (Safety Compliance Report/Terminal Record Update), 343A (Vehicle/Equipment Inspection Report Motor Carrier Safety Operations), or 407F/343A-Aspen (Driver/Vehicle Examination Report) may be accepted by an air district as documentation to demonstrate that a school bus has the safety certification that is granted by a CHP form 292. CHP form 407F/343A-Aspen is a newer version of CHP form 343A. Sufficient copies of CHP forms 343, 343A, or 407F/343A-Aspen must be provided for a school bus to show continuous safety certification during the time period from December 31, 2005 through the date on the current CHP form 292. A CHP form 292 safety certification lasts for 13 months.

The CHP form 343, 343A, or 407F/343A-Aspen must state that the bus has a CHP form 292 certificate, and the form must include the date and the CHP inspector's name and ID/badge number. CHP forms 343, 343A, and 407F/343A-Aspen are not typically signed by CHP inspectors, and an inspector's name and ID/badge number are acceptable in lieu of an inspector's signature on these forms.

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2. If CHP forms 343, 343A, or 407F/343A-Aspen are not available as the documentation for continuous safety certification, then the air district must request that the school district obtain from the CHP a letter that attests to the fact that the school bus has been continuously safety certified, as would be proven by a CHP form 292, since December 31, 2005. The CHP letter can include multiple buses; however, each bus must be identified by its vehicle identification number, license plate number, and the name of the school district that owns the bus.
3. If the school district is unable to provide to the air district the documentation listed in numbers 1. or 2. above, then the air district should consult with ARB staff. In addition, per the 2008 Guidelines, air districts have additional flexibility to fund school buses with safety certifications that have lapsed in the past. The 2008 Guidelines state that on "a case-by-case basis, an air district may use AB 923 funding as the primary source of funding to replace a school bus that has a CHP safety certification (CHP form 292) that has lapsed in the past. In this instance, the bus must have a current CHP safety certification (CHP form 292), and the air district must make the determination that the school bus is being used regularly by the school district."